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UNCLAS MANAMA 000491

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FOR RP "CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIC EDUCATION," FEBRUARY 7 - 25, 2005.

1. On March 26, 2005 APAO and Cultural Assistant met with Khalid Al Khaja, the Senior Specialist in Social Studies at the Ministry of Education and the point of contact for the implementation of MEPI-funded civic education programs in public Bahraini schools. Mr. Al Khaja emphasized the Minister of Education's strong interest in the IV program. The Minister personally encouraged Al Khaja to participate in the program to "benefit the Ministry in advancing its civic education and curriculum department."

2. Mr. Al Khaja admitted to being reluctant to travel to the U.S. because of stereotypes about Americans. "Hollywood films and U.S. media project violent images of America," said Mr. Al Khaja. While on the program he discovered that the American people are friendly and welcoming, which made him feel he was "not a stranger from another country". He was also exposed to the diverse communities living in the U.S. He excitedly cited the example of the cooperation between the Mayor of Louisville who is Jewish and his deputy, a Palestinian. He was encouraged that they are working together for the interest of the American public, regardless of their origins, and was hopeful for similar attitudes in the Middle East.

3. Al Khaja is currently working to introduce coursework on civic education, specifically the constitution, separation of powers, women and children's rights, role of civil society, and human rights, in primary and secondary Bahraini public schools. Al Khaja is hopeful that civic education will be implemented in Bahraini classrooms in January 2006. He is working with Arab Civitas, a MEPI education pillar implementer, to secure and translate books on civic education that will be used in the public school curriculum. In addition he is organizing train-the-trainers programs for teachers that will teach civic responsibility. He hopes that the qualities that he witnessed during his IV program such as community service, peaceful dissent by citizens, and political participation at a young age will become future topics of discussion in Bahraini classrooms.

MONROE